

the word to make some impression on his mind and heart, and some changes in his life; but he is not regenerated, or born again. There is some reformation, but it is not lasting. He hath "not root in himself"—no stability or permanency in true Christian principle—so as to go on unto perfection; but "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." He is fickle, emotional, easily excited, and for a time seems to be interested and engaged; but he is unstable, easily turned aside, and so gives up and becomes more hardened than he was before. Verses 5, 20, 21.

4. "And some fell among thorns; but the thorns sprang up and choked them." Verse 7. This represents a hearer of the word, "the gospel of the kingdom," "and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Verse 22. This hearer is so worldly-minded and occupied with temporal things as not to have any heart or find time to be a Christian, to live a life of piety toward God and beneficence to men. The word is choked so as to be unfruitful; he is not converted.

5. "But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold." Reference is here made to such as hear the word, understand it, receive and retain it in their hearts, and are directed and governed by it. They are faithful, zealous children of God, loving and helpful to their brethren and sisters in Christ, and deeply interested in the salvation of souls. They do all they can for spreading "the gospel of the kingdom," the welfare, strengthening, and purification of the body of Christ; in brief, to bear fruit, which they do according to their ability, their qualifications and circumstances, "some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty." Verse 23.

Having thus examined this introductory parable, in which all classes of hearers are represented, we will proceed to notice the next one which constitutes our principal subject

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES.

In introducing this parable the Lord said, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto, etc." Matt. 13:24. This "kingdom of heaven" is, without doubt, the kingdom, the body, the church, which Christ the King established in the world. He preached "the gospel of the kingdom"—the good news, glad tidings of his regnant government—and he extended the invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, etc." Matt. 11:28-30. Those who hear this "gospel of the kingdom" and receive it into their hearts, who accept of the invitation extended to them, and embrace the rest offered to them on the terms of this gospel, constitute this "kingdom of heaven." It is the visible church of Christ.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares [darnel] also among the wheat, and went away. But when the

blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, an enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." Matt. 13:24-30.

After Jesus had spoken this and two other parables to the multitudes, telling them that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed," and that it "is like unto leaven," setting forth the nature and condition of "the kingdom of heaven," or church of Christ, the Revised version says, verse 36, "Then he left the multitudes, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field." He at once entered upon the explanation, and when he had given it, that they might clearly understand it, he followed with three more parables, setting forth what "the kingdom of heaven is like unto." He then said to them, Verse 51, "Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea." Now if they understood his explanation and his parables, there is no good reason why we may not if we pay strict attention to what he says. Let us not forget that this parable, and all these parables, except the first, are not intended to describe all the different classes of hearers in the world, but that they are given to acquaint us with "the kingdom of heaven" in the world—with the condition or state of the visible church of God on earth.

In his explanation Jesus said, Verse 37, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and Verse 38, the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and Verse 39, the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. Verse 40. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world, (*Marginal*) the consummation of the age. Verse 41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity; Verse 42, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Verse 43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear."

It will be understood and not forgotten that the position here assumed that the parable of the sower and the different conditions of the soil on which the seed fell represents the different classes of hearers in the world. Three of these classes were never truly or permanently converted—were not regenerated; but the fourth class represents the truly converted, the regenerated, "the kingdom of heaven" to which the other six parables have reference.

With the foregoing view before us we meet with a few statements that seem a little difficult to understand and interpret. One of these is the sowing of tares by the enemy, "while men slept;" and another is, "Let both grow together until the harvest." That the present essay may not be too lengthy, there will be an effort made to explain more fully in another article. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

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SERMONS IN QUAIN TEXTS

BY THE EDITOR

Text: So they made him a supper. John 12:2.

They were two loving sisters who made this supper for Jesus, and they did it out of gratitude to him. Jesus had been very kind to them. That home had been blest because of Jesus' presence as all homes will be where he is allowed a place. Death had been in that home; the grave had robbed it of a rich treasure, but Jesus robbed the grave and brought back to life again the brother of these loving sisters. He turned their sorrow into joy. This is just what Jesus is ever doing. Many a mother is happy and rejoices because Jesus has brought back a wayward son as if from the dead, dead he was in sin and buried in a spiritual grave. It is a beautiful story, the story of how peace and joy were brought to that Bethany home, but the story has been repeated in thousands of homes since that day, homes in which Jesus is now honored for having united the family circle in the everlasting ties of God's love. Blessed is that home where Jesus is the first and most honored guest.

Text: And it was night. John 13:30.

The words are spoken of Judas, and the time when he had gone out from the presence of Jesus. It was night. The sun had gone down and darkness filled the streets in the city. But there was a deeper, a thicker, a gloomier darkness in the soul of the traitor than that which clouded natural objects. He had allowed Satan to drive Christ out of his heart and with Jesus the last candle of hope and joy that burned in his soul was quenched. Follow the wretched man to the end and it was darkness to the day when his life came to a miserable close, and even that was not the end of the darkness. Then began that everlasting darkness, the outer darkness, the darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, the darkness of that world of doomed spirits. Surely that was a dark night when Judas went out from the presence of Jesus. Satan always leads into darkness, he hates light as do all his followers, for their deeds are evil. If we would have light in this world and light in the world to come, we need to remain very close to Jesus, for he is the light of the world, and away from him is darkness.

No man is a whole man until he is a holy man.